



COMPREHENSIVE SOUTH AFRICA: PRIVATE BIRDING TOUR REPORT

13 NOVEMBER – 13 DECEMBER 2024

By Dylan Vasapolli



*We found many incredible and sought-after species on this trip – though there are arguably none more desired than the **Drakensberg Rockjumper**.*

Overview

This private South African birding tour was put together specifically for dedicated world birders, Brad, Marcel and Simon. Lists of possible species were examined, and ultimately, a comprehensive routing was devised. This would see the trip beginning in Cape Town, before making a typical route through western South Africa. First heading up the west coast, and then exploring the Namaqualand and Bushmanland areas of the Northern Cape. The trip would then transit through Kimberley, en-route to Johannesburg, before spending a few days birding in the broader Wider Gauteng area – including such excellent localities as Mabusa Nature Reserve and the famous Zaagkuilsdrift Road. The route would then go up to Polokwane, before visiting the Magoebaskloof forests, and then beginning a circuit down south. Dullstroom and Wakkerstroom would be birded for their grassland endemics, before doing a more typical route (similar to our Subtropical Tour), running through Zululand – Hluhluwe and surrounds, St Lucia and Eshowe and Mtunzini – before heading to the mighty Drakensberg Mountains. The trip would then conclude at Durban, on the east coast of South Africa, some 31 days later.

As a whole, the tour was immensely successful, with virtually every possible and feasible target bird being seen. There were naturally a few species which were theoretically possible (but highly unlikely), that were not seen. We had relatively few interruptions from a logistical and weather side of things – with the only limiting factor being that we had some extreme heat on several days (which meant we had to get through our birding pretty efficiently). The more dedicated nature of this trip – basically target hunting, also meant that we didn't spend lots of effort trying for more common and widespread species, and many of these were not seen on our route. Naturally, we would stop and enjoy them if we found such birds.



*We had an exciting time birding in the dry Northern Cape area – complete with all its many endemics, especially larks like this **Red Lark**, which has a tiny global distribution.*

Over the course of this comprehensive tour, a great many species were seen, with far too many highlights to list all. We enjoyed some exciting Northern Cape endemic birding, with us finding all of the difficult (and nomadic) speciality larks in a 24-hour period – **Sclater's, Red, Stark's and Dune (Barlow's) Larks** and **Black-eared Sparrow-Lark**. We had some great night drives on the trip, finding multiple **Southern Aardwolves** and several **Aardvarks**, along with snazzy **Bat-eared Foxes** and many others. **Rudd's Lark** took a herculean effort to get, and we were well rewarded with incredible views of this rare bird, and this was a consistent theme throughout – with our hard work usually producing the birds. Other examples of this went to **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Burchell's Courser, Short-tailed Pipit, Pel's Fishing Owl, Buff-spotted Flufftail and Knysna Woodpecker**, amongst so many others.

A detailed daily account can be read below, and the various species lists are located at the end of the report.



*We also undertook several night drives looking for some of the scarcer nocturnal mammals found in South Africa – this **Southern Aardwolf** was one of our targets we saw well.*

Detailed Report

Day 1, 13th November 2024. Arrival into Cape Town

Following Simon and Marcel's midday arrival into Cape Town, we transferred to our comfortable guesthouse overlooking Table Mountain. Brad, fresh from his days with Joshua birding in the broader Cape Town and surrounds area on a short custom tour, linked up with us as well, before we set off for the famed Strandfontein Sewerage Works. We spent the afternoon birding the vast network of ponds and settling dams though, with the wind pumping, it was almost entirely spent

from within the car. Our main target was **Maccoa Duck**, and we promptly set out trying to find one. With the wind haring over the water, everything was seeking cover on the dams' verges, and we slowly worked our way through the ponds and vast flocks of ducks. The bulk of the ducks seen comprised of **Cape Shoveler** and **Cape Teal**, though with smaller numbers of **Yellow-billed Ducks** and **Southern Pochards** also present, before we eventually found our target **Maccoa Duck**. The bird was fortunately close to the edge, and gave us some good views, before we carried on to see what else we could find. We enjoyed the vast numbers of both **Greater** and **Lesser Flamingos** at the ponds, along with a wide range of other waterbirds, including various herons, **Pied Avocets**, a few shorebirds including **Bar-tailed Godwit** and innumerable numbers of **Hartlaub's** and **Kelp Gulls** with several tern species intermixed with them. Eventually though, with our target well seen, and the wind having gotten to us, we called it a day and settled in for the evening.

Day 2, 14th November 2024. Birding up the west coast to Langebaan

After checking out of our comfortable lodge, we found ourselves up the west coast north of Cape Town at dawn, looking for our first of the strandveld specials. Our first stop in the greater Darling area was successful, and we picked up on a calling **Cape Clapper Lark**. The bird was a bit flighty and shy, and did leave us wanting more. Everything else, though, showed well, with the likes of **Cape Penduline Tit**, **Karoo Scrub Robin**, **Grey-backed Cisticola** and **Malachite Sunbird** all putting on a show. A little further along, we played a bit of hide and seek with a few **Southern Black Korhaans** that eventually showed, along with enjoying our first **Black Harrier** and **Blue Cranes**. Open and scrubby areas held more good birds like **Namaqua Dove**, **Spotted Thick-knee**, **White-backed Mousebird**, **Bokmakierie**, **Karoo Prinia**, **Pearl-breasted Swallow**, **Chestnut-vented Warbler** and **Capped Wheatear**, amongst many other widespread species.



An up-close and personal Cape Penduline Tit – nothing more than a ball of feathers.

A quick stop at the Tinie Versveld Nature Reserve quickly netted us the local race of **Cloud Cisticola** and our first **Cape Longclaws**, before heading into the West Coast National Park. The Abrahamskraal Hide gave us a pair of fine African Rails that showed well and close, while hulking **Common Ostriches** seen nearby where also enjoyed. Following a quick picnic lunch, we called in at the Seeberg Hide for a quick look. On the route, we vastly improved on our **Southern Black Korhaan** view, along with adding many more waterbirds, ranging from **African Oystercatchers**, nesting **Kittlitz's Plovers**, to vast numbers of **Common Terns** and **Lesser Flamingos** and so many others. The surrounding bush was also good, despite the midday heat, and we notched up **Long-billed Crombec**, **Bar-throated Apalis** and our first **Southern Double-collared Sunbird**. We then checked into our lovely guesthouse in Langebaan, before having a short break. Resuming in the late afternoon, we explored some areas on the outskirts of town which very quickly gave us a pair of excellent **Grey Tits**, along with others we had seen already, before we shot into the West Coast National Park again. The tides were a bit better at Seeberg, and we added a few more shorebirds, like **Red Knot**, before going on a search for Grey-winged Francolin (that had been eluding us to this point). The francolins remained elusive throughout the rest of the day, though we did enjoy a good afternoon birding, adding several new species like **Acacia Pied Barbet**, **Rock Kestrel** and both **Yellow** and **White-throated Canaries**. We enjoyed a great dinner and a few cold beers to round off an excellent first full day in the country.



*We had our first dose of endemic lark birding at Langebaan – herewith a **Cape Clapper Lark**.*

Day 3, 15th November 2024. Endemic birding on the west coast

We met up with local South African birding legend Faansie Peacock, for our early morning stint of birding in the Langebaan Country Estate. Here, we did a short birding walk around, finding many more excellent birds. First up was a fine **Cape Long-billed Lark**, where we enjoyed good

looks and watched as a male displayed up into the air for us. **Cape Clapper Larks** were full up, and we had incredible looks at many – including one bird that came and displayed right over our heads, virtually within touching distance, and then promptly landed in the road right next to us. Having not used any tape callback, we all looked at one another and said, “What just happened?!”. Following that thrilling experience, we carried on, picking up the likes of strandveld species like **Grey Tit** again, and open country birds like **Large-billed Lark**, **Banded Martin** and **Pin-tailed Whydah**, before moving on. A quick stop at some open land around the back end of town netted us fine looks at **Karoo Lark**, which Faansie had found nesting nearby recently. We then quickly shot into the Langebaan Quarry where the resident pair of nesting **Verreaux’s Eagles** were present and showed well, perched on the rocks near the nest.

We carried on adding a few more widespread species like **Eurasian Bee-eater** and **Lesser Swamp Warbler**, before heading back into the West Coast National Park. **Southern Black Korhaans** and **Cape Penduline Tits** showed well and we carried on our search for the francolins until we eventually found a large covey of **Grey-winged Francolins** next to the road. Although they were somewhat skittish, they showed well. With that being one of our final specials of the area needed, we took a leisurely drive around the park, before heading back to our guesthouse for a midday break. Resuming in the late afternoon saw us exploring the farmlands of the Paternoster area. Large numbers of **Blue Cranes** were seen and enjoyed, as were some of the lovely **South African Shelduck**, out foraging in the fields with them. We worked hard for **Sickle-winged Chat**, which we found in the end, and also enjoyed our first **Mole Snake** crossing the road. Raptors like **Jackal Buzzard** were around, and we again found another pair of **Grey Tits** in the sparse scrubby zones in between the farmland, while numerous **Red-capped Larks** lined the road verges. With the wind almost unbearable now, we called it a day, and settled in for the evening.



*As it so often happens, after struggling for our first **Grey Tit**, the floodgates opened and we had quite a number of further encounters.*

Day 4, 16th November 2024. Birding to Calvinia

We had a long few travel days in store over the next little while – today transiting from the West Coast to Calvinia in the heart of the Karoo. Beginning to settle into a routine, we were up and at it early in the morning, and were soon at the wonderful salt pans around Velddrift. Here, our main target, **Chestnut-banded Plover**, is common and showed amazingly well, with a vast flock of some 60+ individuals all huddled together being hard to top. Vast numbers of waterbirds generally, and especially shorebirds, dot the salt pans here and we quickly scanned through them whilst enjoying our picnic breakfast. Delightful **Cape Teals** were abundant, as were snazzy **Black-eared Grebes** and both **Lesser** and **Greater Flamingo**, while a flock of hulking **Great White Pelicans** were seen in the distance. Scanning through the vast flocks of shorebirds gathered here gave us all of the expected species, including the long-continuing vagrant **Red-necked Phalarope**.



*A delightful **Chestnut-banded Plover** showing in the early morning light.*

Content, we carried on, and headed off to the farmlands in the Piketberg district to try for the nomadic Burchell's Coursers that had been seen recently. We spent a short while scanning and cruising through the area, but couldn't turn any of the many **Crowned Lapwings** into the coursers. A distant **Ludwig's Bustard** was around, and we enjoyed several **Grey-backed Sparrow-Larks** on the roads. The main highlight arguably went to the mammals however, with a den of **Bat-eared Foxes** being a surprise find, along with two incredible **Cape Porcupines** that came wondering about in broad daylight (this is usually a nocturnal mammal). With a long drive ahead still, we pressed onwards, pausing for lunch at the Kransvleiport. Although the midday sun was blaring down on us, we added the likes of **Fairy Flycatcher** and **Layard's Warbler** here, along with enjoying a large contingent of canaries which included a shy **Protea Canary** and several of the scarce **Cape Siskins**. We carried on to Calvinia, stopping for a small group of Ludwig's Bustards

showing a bit better than the earlier bird today, before arriving at our quaint hotel in the early afternoon for a short rest. We took a short drive to the Akkerendam Nature Reserve, on the edge of town, for some late afternoon birding. The afternoon was quiet, and we worked hard for our first true karoo species like **Rufous-eared Warbler**, which did show well in the end. A small group of **Black-headed Canaries** were awfully skittish, and we added others like **Nicholson's Pipit** and **Cape Bunting**. The large dam held a few waterbirds like **Great Crested Grebe**, **Southern Pochard** and a few distant **Maccoa Ducks** – all actually excellent birds for the province, Northern Cape. We wrapped up the day at the river on the outskirts of town, where a feisty **Namaqua Warbler** eventually showed.

Day 5, 17th November 2024. Larks of Brandvlei and long drive to Springbok

With a long, but highly anticipated (and very exciting) day ahead, we bade farewell to our Calvinia hotel early in the morning, and made our way up to Brandvlei for the start of the morning. As the sun was beginning to warm up the plains, we found ourselves at our appointed water trough on private land, and were immediately reveling in all the birds coming down to drink. Flocks of **Namaqua Sandgrouse** noisily flew about, while constant groupings of **Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark** and **Lark-like Bunting** were always about. Our main target was **Slater's Lark**, and it took a little while of waiting before we had our first bird come down – which soon vanished. Fortunately though, another small group came in, landing just in front of us, and gave us good views! With the main target seen, we enjoyed the spectacle of hundreds of birds milling around, and did well to pick up other highly sought-after birds like **Stark's Lark** and **Black-eared Sparrow-Lark**, which also came down to the trough.



Slater's Lark is a difficult, nomadic and highly sought-after dry country bird – we had an incredible morning finding this, and several other sought-after birds.

Larks aside, there were lots of other passerines about, including **Red-headed Finch** and our first **Red-billed Queleas**. We then started exploring the surrounds, and quickly found other targets like **Karoo Korhaan** and **Spike-heeled Lark**, while some exploration further away yielded a fine **Red Lark** and **Tractrac Chat**. We had done remarkably well and seen many of the Karoo's most prized (and difficult) birds, just in a few short hours. With a long drive ahead, we started the route to Springbok, taking some back roads to get there. A few stops for new birds gave us **Black-chested Snake-Eagle**, **Pale Chanting Goshawk**, **Chat Flycatcher**, **Karoo Chat** and a large group of **Black-eared Sparrow-Larks**. After a long drive, we arrived in Springbok and quickly checked into our lodge in the afternoon. We had but a moment to get our breaths, before we shot off for some final day birding on the town outskirts. A large group of **Namaqua Sandgrouse** started our afternoon birding session off, perched next to the road, before we ran into an excellent family of **Karoo Eremomelas** – another highly prized special! We concentrated on birding the big rocky mountains, looking for the difficult Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, but had no luck. Loads of other birds kept us company though, including **Ground Woodpecker**, **Pale-winged Starling**, **Mountain Chat** and **Dusky Sunbird**, amongst others. Following a long and intense day, we settled in for the evening.



Namaqua Sandgrouse is one of the special birds of western South Africa, with their distinct calls drifting over the plains in the morning as they commute up and down.

Day 6, 18th November 2024. Birding Port Nolloth and Springbok

Following our excellent day yesterday, much of the pressure was off for today, with only a few targets left in the area. We had a long morning drive to get to the coastal Port Nolloth region, where we would spend the morning. Numerous **Greater Kestrels** were seen along the way and, once we settled in at the main birding north of the town, the local race of **Dune Lark** (which was formerly

its own species, Barlow's Lark), was difficult. The birds were rather shy and skittish, and showed only distantly, so we opted to take our breakfast. This proved a good move, as after breakfast the **Dune Larks** showed much better, and gave us point-blank views! Although this seemingly barren, coastal vegetation seems lifeless, there are always birds about, and we added the likes of **Yellow-bellied Eremomela** and **Tractrac Chat**, along with enjoying repeat views of the snazzy **Rufous-eared Warbler** and others like **Karoo Scrub Robin** and **Yellow Canary**. We made the jaunt up to the Orange River Mouth, where we successfully scanned the estuary for the scarce and localized **Damara Tern**, before returning back to Port Nolloth. Once back in town we scanned the waves beyond the harbor, hoping for the Benguela current endemic **Heaviside's Dolphin** – which took no time to find, and showed well. We returned back to Springbok, where we had more of an afternoon break. In the late afternoon, we resumed our search for **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler**, starting off in the hills south of town. Our first stop produced the bird almost immediately, but we had to reposition, with the sun and wind hampering things – and were rewarded with good, and up-close views, albeit briefly, as the bird didn't hang around for very long. We birded the surrounds for a bit longer, and enjoyed repeat views of birds like **Verreaux's Eagle**, a flying **Ludwig's Bustard**, **Layard's Warbler**, **Mountain Chat** and **Dusky Sunbird**.



*The reason for venturing to coastal Port Nolloth was to look for the now distinct race of **Dune Lark**, which was formerly split as its own species, Barlow's Lark.*

Day 7, 19th November 2024. Birding to Pofadder

With only a short distance to go to get to Pofadder, our next destination, we had the morning available to spend birding around Springbok. The local Goegap Nature Reserve only opened later in the morning, so we spent our early morning in the surrounding hills – which were excellent. We started off with a fine pair of showy **Cinnamon-breasted Warblers** that put on a wonderful

display and also watched the antics of the many other species that we were now familiar with, in the surrounds. Just before we were about to call it and head to the reserve, a small group of **Black-headed Canaries** came flying through and settled. It turned out they were immature birds, yet very curious, and gave us excellent views. Even though it was only around 8am, the sun and heat were almost unbearable already (this would prove to be the hottest day of the tour), and our time at Goegap was going from shade patch to shade patch. With the **Cinnamon-breasted Warbler** out of the way (the main purpose of coming to the reserve), we focused on the acacia around the offices, and found new birds like **Cardinal Woodpecker**, **Pririt Batis** and **Red-eyed Bulbul**, while enjoying loads of others we had already seen, like **Grey Tit**, **Fairy Flycatcher** and **Dusky Sunbird**.



*We spent some time watching skulking **Cinnamon-breasted Warblers** around Springbok.*

We took a short drive around some of the loop roads, which gave us some welcome A/C for a bit, though this was very quiet. We made some calls to our Pofadder hotel and arranged for an early check-in, and were soon there (with the temperatures on the way getting into the low 40s Celsius). We enjoyed the comfort of our cool rooms until the late afternoon, when we all resurfaced. We would do some evening birding on the roads out of Pofadder, getting to our dinner point where we would then night drive back to town. The afternoon was still baking hot, with little moving. Eventually, we saw our first bird – **Karoo Chat**, and ended up with a few good birds; a pair of **Karoo Korhaans** were calling loudly across the plains – with their strange honking calls drifting through, while we found a few **Stark's Larks** again, along with several **Ludwig's Bustards**. We reached our end point and enjoyed our picnic dinner – and much to our dismay, the wind picked up soon after and turned almost to gale force. We tried for Cape Eagle Owl, but had no luck in the intense wind, and our night drive back to town was filled with mostly dust – ourselves and the car were all covered head to toe. We did enjoy our first **Spring Hares**, and a few distant **Bat-eared**

Foxes, but found little moving. Somewhat bedraggled (and in desperate need of a shower), we settled in for a late evening.

Day 8, 20th November 2024. Pofadder birding

Following yesterday's extreme heat, this morning greeted us with overcast, rather cold windy weather (with even a bit of drizzle), and we began our day in the Koa Dunes near Aggeneys. The rocky plains, just before reaching the dunes, gave us our first **Karoo Long-billed Lark**. After we got into the dunes we set about exploring – and found several **Red Larks** (this area is known for these), along with a few **Fawn-colored Larks**. A **Northern Black Korhaan** showed briefly, and then promptly disappeared. Groups of **Namaqua Sandgrouse** began their morning drinking flights, and were active for a while. We then started a long loop road to get back to Pofadder, birding along the length of it. We enjoyed our first groups of **Sociable** and **Scaly-feathered Weaves**, then an opportunistic stop to look at a few close **Klipspringers** produced a fine pair of **Double-banded Sandgrouse** next to the road. The rest of the route didn't produce any new birds but gave us looks at many of those we had already seen. Back in town, a large flock of mixed swifts gave us the massive **Bradfield's Swift**, while some greenery in the town held onto birds like **Red-eyed Bulbul**, **Karoo Thrush** and **Orange River White-eye**. We enjoyed a good midday rest once again, and resumed in the late afternoon with another drive on some of the backroads around town. Not too much remained for us to see, but we tried our hand at finding Burchell's Courser, without luck. The likes of **Red-faced Mousebird**, **Black-chested Prinia**, **Spike-heeled Lark** and **Ant-eating Chat** all showed in the afternoon. With the wind picking up again, we opted out of another night drive, instead planning to do it in the early morning hours.



Karoo Long-billed Larks were seen on the stony plains around Pofadder.

Day 9, 21st November 2024. Final Karoo birding around Pofadder

We were up at a very early hour and set off on our night drive. The wind had indeed settled down and it was far more pleasant not fighting all the dust. Some careful scanning got us a fine **Southern Aardwolf**, and we enjoyed looks at **Spring Hares** and **Bat-eared Foxes** again. We reached our end point, unloaded and began trying for the scarce **Cape Eagle-Owl**. We had a distant response but, unfortunately, the bird was in an inaccessible area far away. We persisted, and it was with some shock that, with the sun just breaking over the horizon, we picked up the massive owl flying along the ridge line towards us (well spotted, Simon!). The bird flew past just above and carried on out of sight – we were thrilled! We headed back to Pofadder, gathered our things from the hotel and checked out. Soon we found ourselves at the small border ‘village’ of Onseepkans, where we almost immediately connected with **Rosy-faced Lovebird**. **Namaqua Warbler** showed very well on the river shortly afterwards, far improving our views from earlier in the trip.



A confiding Namaqua Warbler showed well on the Orange River.

With our main targets out the way, the sun beating down on us and the mercury rising, we made our way towards Augrabies Falls National Park. We stopped for the tiny **Pygmy Falcon** on the way, and then called in at the falls for a short spell of birding. It was extremely hot again, touching 40° C once more, and the shaded campsite produced some good birds – with our first proper acacia species like **Common Scimitarbill** and **Ashy Tit** showing well. While enjoying the impressive views of the falls themselves, **Black Stork** and **African Fish Eagle** were seen overhead, we then enjoyed lunch in the restaurant. It was a short drive to Upington, our destination and, after checking in, we had an afternoon rest. In the very late afternoon, we quickly shot out north of town to scan the dry plains for Burchell’s Courser once more – which was unsuccessful. We did find several wonderful **Northern Black Korhaans**, and several **Stark’s Larks**.

Day 10, 22nd November 2024. Kalahari birding in Kimberley

We had a long drive ahead of us, as we made the journey to Kimberley (where we had also gotten wind of several Burchell's Coursers being seen) – so we didn't dally, and made good progress getting there. By mid-morning we had arrived, checked in with the lovely folks at Marrick Safaris, and were out on the plains trying for the coursers. It took a little while of searching, but eventually we picked up on some distant prospects and, on closer inspection, found a fabulous group of five **Burchell's Coursers**. The birds were shy and kept their distance from us, but using the car as a mobile hide allowed us to get closer. We soaked up our views of this very difficult bird, and whilst enjoying them, a single **Temminck's Courser** came running out with them at one point. Great to have comparative views side by side of these two very similar birds. We also did well to find a pair of **Double-banded Coursers** nearby, giving us three courser species in a short space of time and at the same site! With the pressure off, and the midday sun burning us, we checked into the lodge here and enjoyed a midday rest.



***Burchell's Courser** is one of South Africa's most difficult resident birds (it is best sought in Namibia). We put in an enormous amount of effort to get this bird, and were elated at finally finding this group – herewith two **Burchell's Coursers** in the group.*

Although the afternoon was still warm, we enjoyed a good walk around the property – appreciating time out the vehicle (after much driving time in these early days). We started off in the acacia thornveld habitat around the lodge, finding common birds like **Crested Barbet**, **Fiscal Flycatcher**, **Kalahari Scrub Robin** and **White-browed Sparrow-Weaver**, along with more sought-after specials like **Brubru**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Marico Flycatcher**, **Black-faced Waxbill** and **Shaft-tailed Whydah**, amongst others. A **Eurasian Honey Buzzard**, a rarity here, gave us good flight views, while the open plains held species like **Blue Crane**, **Northern Black Korhaan** and

Common Ostrich, along with loads of animals. Following an excellent dinner, we set off on our first night drive on the property. Marrick has become famous for providing good access to many of the difficult nocturnal mammals of southern Africa – Aardvark, Aardwolf and Black-footed Cat, as examples, all occurring here, and seen with regularity. We set off, and enjoyed a fine (although long) night drive – delivering multiple **Southern Aardwolves** and **Bat-eared Foxes**, along with other exciting mammals like **Cape Porcupine** and even **African Wild Cat**. Try as we might, we couldn't find any Aardvarks. A few birds were out and about, and we enjoyed our first **Rufous-cheeked Nightjars**, along with some **Ludwig's Bustards**, in the spotlight. Eventually we returned to the lodge and enjoyed a few hours of sleep.



*Roving parties of comical **Scaly-feathered Weavers** were common in the Kalahari thornveld.*

Day 11, 23rd November 2024. Mokala National Park and Marrick Safaris birding

Up bright and early before the heat kicked in, we found ourselves exploring the open plains of Marrick. Our main target, **Eastern Clapper Lark**, was calling right on cue, and we enjoyed multiple looks at several birds, including some displaying birds. **Desert** and the nominate race of **Cloud Cisticolas** were also evident and showed well. Satisfied, we made the journey southward to Mokala National Park, where we would spend the bulk of the day. We started off in the more remote Lilydale section, where we immediately headed for the viewing platform. In between all the animals, we were able to latch onto some **Quailfinches** coming down to drink – though the views weren't great – while also enjoying multiple **Melodious Larks** over the surrounding plains. This is a special bird, and was very unexpected at this locality. Just as we were beginning to give up hope, we heard **Burchell's Sandgrouse** and found a pair coming rapidly down to the water's edge to drink. They didn't hang around for long and were soon in the air, flying past us and heading away.

Nevertheless, we had been successful, and headed to the Lilydale camp for a walk around. Although it was hot and quiet already, by mid-morning we had seen a few new birds like **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Lesser Grey Shrike**, **Wattled Starling** and **Buffy Pipit**. There were others we had seen earlier in the trip like **Pirit Batis**, **Chat Flycatcher**, **Kalahari Scrub Robin**, **Ant-eating Chat** and **Scaly-feathered Weaver**, amongst others. We then set off on a drive through the reserve, bound for the lower section of the park. The thornveld towards the bottom gave us birds like **Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill**, **Golden-tailed Woodpecker** and **Golden-breasted Bunting**, along with a feisty **Pearl-spotted Owlet**. We also did well to find a skulking **Red-crested Korhaan** hiding in the shade. Following our picnic lunch, we returned to Marrick, where we took it easy in the early afternoon and tried to bank a few hours of sleep (in preparation for another late night ahead). In the late afternoon, we took a quick trip out to the plains to try for **Pink-billed Lark**, and were successful in finding several birds, though they were awfully flighty and skittish – not giving us good looks. Our night drive, much like last night, was excellent. We enjoyed repeat views of **Rufous-cheeked Nightjar**, and also found a lovely **Spotted Eagle Owl**. The mammals were excellent too, and we had several sightings of **Aardvarks** this time, which was a bonus, on top of all the regulars. Try as we might though, the Black-footed Cats eluded us still.



Aardvark is a highly prized nocturnal mammal – we were successful on our second night drive around Kimberley, and were over the moon with our excellent views!

Day 12, 24th November 2024. Long drive to Johannesburg

With a long drive to Johannesburg on the cards for the day, we got in some final morning birding around Marrick first, before setting off. We tried hard to improve our views of **Pink-billed Lark**, and it took a herculean effort to finally track these flighty birds down on the ground – and have

them stay still long enough for everyone to see. Eventually our hard work paid off, and we enjoyed good views of them. A little further along, we found a lovely **Secretarybird** striding through – though it remained distant and soon vanished. The thornveld around the lodge itself was also very birdy, and we enjoyed the likes of **Diederik Cuckoo**, **Common Scimitarbill**, **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Lesser Honeyguide**, **Brown-crowned Tchagra**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Ashy Tit**, **Black-faced Waxbill** and **Red-headed Finch**, amongst many others. We bade our farewells to the lovely folks at Marrick and settled in for the drive. We made good progress, and checked into our Johannesburg lodge in the early afternoon. A huge storm system was approaching over the area, and we headed out for our afternoon birding with some trepidation, wondering if we'd get any birding in. Our main target was **Orange River Francolin**, and we got to the site just as the wind was picking up and rain started coming down. We found an **Orange River Francolin** just in the nick of time, before being rained out, and then called it a day.



*We had but a few minutes to find **Orange River Francolin** before a big storm arrived – and we had fabulous views!*

Day 13, 25th November 2024. Tough birds around Johannesburg

Geared up for a full day out, we had an early start, as we ventured firstly to the Rustenburg area. Our main aim was to get the difficult **Yellow-throated Sandgrouse** first off. We arrived on site and settled in to wait until the birds typically begin moving and flying around the area. Unfortunately, there was no sight or sound and, just as we had given up and gotten back into the car, we picked up on a flock of birds flying in the distance (well spotted, Brad!). The birds were clearly the sandgrouse, though the views left a lot to be desired, and we tracked the route they were flying as it appeared some were coming down to land again. We sped off in that direction and began scanning suitable looking areas, finding a small flock walking about. We had good looks

while they were walking around, they then took flight and headed away. Here we also found our first **Swainson's Spurfowls**, along with others like **Temminck's Courser**, **Red-breasted Swallow** and **Long-tailed Paradise Whydah**.

Relieved, after thinking we had dipped on the sandgrouse, we headed towards Kgaswane Nature Reserve, scenically set in the Magaliesberg hills. We started off in the rocky hills, which quickly gave us the hoped for **Striped Pipit** – also around were **Nicholson's Pipit** and **Cinnamon-breasted Bunting**. We then birded the grassy plains deeper into the reserve, which gave us a fine **Wing-snapping Cisticola**, along with many **Rufous-naped Larks**. We then took a walk around the mixed woodland of the campsite and picnic area, which is always filled with birds. As this was our first proper birding in woodland in the eastern part of South Africa, there were lots of new birds around, and we found more special birds like **Southern Boubou**, **Kurrichane Thrush**, **White-throated Robin-Chat** and **Red-collared Widowbird**, along with others like **Striped Kingfisher**, **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**, **Black-collared Barbet**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **Violet-backed Starling** and **Blue Waxbill**.



*We were able to find a few of the nomadic **Cuckoo-finches** at Rietvlei.*

We began the drive back to Johannesburg and, with some time available, opted to stop in briefly at the Rietvlei Nature Reserve to try for the nomadic **Cuckoo-finch**. A few birds had recently been coming in to a water puddle to drink, and we settled in to wait. Although it was hot and sunny, there were quite a few birds moving about, with **African Stonechat**, **Southern Masked Weaver**, **Southern Red Bishop**, **Fan-tailed** and **Long-tailed Widowbirds** and **Cape Longclaws** all coming and going. Right on cue, we heard the distinct call notes of **Cuckoo-finch**, and picked up on a pair coming down to drink. They showed very well and, happy with our views, we headed back to the lodge for an afternoon break. We dedicated our evening to African Grass Owl, setting

off from the lodge in the late afternoon, with our picnic dinner, to the Bapsfontein area. We enjoyed our meal, with loads of waterbirds milling about and coming in to roost. As it was getting dark, we picked up on a **Marsh Owl** quartering about, which then turned into several birds. Try as we might, we could only find **Marsh Owls** this evening, so eventually we called it and headed back for a few hours of sleep.

Day 14, 26th November 2024. Birding north-eastern Gauteng, and transfer to Zaagkuilsdrift

With a very exciting (albeit, long) day ahead, we checked out of our lodge very early in the morning, bound for the north-eastern Wider Gauteng region, where we would spend the first part of the day. Starting off in the mega Verena grasslands, we set off trying to find a host of difficult birds. Our first stop saw us latching onto a superb displaying male **Denham's Bustard** – with its impressive white neck feathers all inflated and puffed out – what a sighting! Our next stop produced our highly desired **Short-tailed Pipit** – where we found a pair of birds displaying. We needed some patience and skill to get views on the ground of these shy birds, but we were well rewarded with excellent views in the end. Others like the local *barrowi* race of **White-bellied Bustard** remained as heard only. Our next stop was a small wetland, where we soon heard our target, **Red-chested Flufftail**, and were then surprised when the male exploded out of the grass sedges and came flying straight towards us, landing just in front of us – very unusual behavior for this species (and family) which very rarely flies. Nonetheless, we were content and resumed our birding, finding **Burchell's Coucal** and **Orange-breasted Waxbills** in the same wetland. **Melodious Larks** were seen nearby, along with **Plain-backed Pipit**, before heading to the nearby Mabusa Nature Reserve.



*Mabusa Nature Reserve holds many exciting woodland birds, like this **Green-capped Eremomela**. We had a brilliant morning, and saw some great birds in the reserve.*

This remote reserve offers some excellent broad-leaved woodland, and we immediately set about trying to find its specials, despite the temperatures beginning to soar (even though it was just after 8am). Our first stop for a mixed flock produced an excitable group of **Green-capped Eremomelas** (one of the main specials), along with other typical flock birds like **Chinspot Batis**, **Southern Black Tit** and **Black-backed Puffback**. We also found a few **Rock-loving (Lazy) Cisticolas** here, while a vocal **White-bellied Sunbird** came to inspect all the commotion. A **Short-toed Rock Thrush** started calling, and we soon had the bird in our sights, and had fabulous views of this scarce species, before **Shelley's Francolin** started up. The rocky hills here make finding this notoriously difficult species even harder, and this time was no different. We scanned and scanned, and waiting and waited for movement, from our hidden perch. Out of options and the bird not responding anymore, we resorted to trying to flush it and took a walk through the area, and successfully managed to flush a single bird which then flew down the valley and out of sight.

We bumped into a few more flocks as we went about our birding, adding further species like **Brown-backed Honeybird**, **Black Cuckooshrike**, **Black-headed Oriole**, **Black-crowned Tchagra** and **Red-headed Weaver**. We tried our hand at looking for the rare White-backed Night Heron at a known spot, but couldn't find the birds. We took our lunch break scenically overlooking the river valley from our small patch of shade, before taking the drive to the lovely Zaagkuilsdrift Lodge, where we would be for the next two days. We had a bit of downtime in the afternoon, following a busy day, and did a brief late afternoon spell of birding. The dense acacia thornveld in this area is legendary and we had a superb afternoon finding targets like **Southern Pied Babbler** and **Barred Wren-Warbler**, along with other more widespread species that were new – **Crested Francolin**, **Natal Spurfowl**, **Grey Go-away-bird**, **Woodland Kingfisher**, **Southern Red-billed Hornbill**, **Gabar Goshawk**, **Magpie Shrike**, **Red-billed Oxpecker**, **Burchell's Starling** and a mixed flock of both **Village** and **Purple Indigobirds**.



Southern Pied Babbler is a thornveld special on the Zaagkuilsdrift Road.

Day 15, 27th November 2024. Kalahari birding on the Zaagkuilsdrift Road

We had a full day at our disposal to bird this wonderful area, and set off at our usual early hour. We made our way over to the drier thornveld around Kgomo-Kgomo, where we would spend the bulk of the morning. The wetlands and floodplains for which this site is famous were, of course, dry at this time of year, so none of those specials were on the cards. Nevertheless, it was a superb morning and we made slow progress on the road. Our first stop for a party of fidgety **Burnt-necked Eremomelas** produced an excellent **Cape Penduline Tit**, a surprise **Great Sparrow** and delightful **Marico Sunbirds**. Further stops for bright **Violet-eared** and **Black-faced Waxbills** and **Green-winged Pytilia** were made, along with a far better showing of **Barred Wren Warbler**, and a host of cuckoos – including **Great Spotted**, **Black** and **Jacobin Cuckoos**. The dry floodplains held a few waterbirds, and the edges produced **Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** and a small flock of **Black-winged Pratincoles** – great to get this species early in the season here. **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** were seen perched on the roadside wires, along with **Lesser Kestrel**. Obviously, the species listed here are only a small number of the total species seen for the morning (which exceeded 100) – many of the other acacia species were seen as well. We enjoyed a well-deserved midday rest during the heat, and did a late afternoon walk around the lodge property. A big storm system was approaching in the distance, and we found a few new birds like **Terrestrial Brownbul** and **Red-billed Firefinch**, before we scurried back to the lodge itself, just missing the storm. We were worried about our proposed night drive after dinner, but things calmed down and the sky opened up in time, and we were soon on our way. Understandably, things were fairly quiet after having just received a good soaking, and it took a while to find our target, **Southern White-faced Owl**, which we managed to do in the end. We also enjoyed great views of **Rufous-cheeked Nightjars** on the road, which is a scarce bird in this area.



Barred Wren Warbler is a thornveld special – here in-situ giving an idea of the habitat it inhabits.

Day 16, 28th November 2024. Final Wider Gauteng birding, and transfer to Polokwane

Rolling into our beds late last night didn't deter us as we set off bright and early, bound for the Rust de Winter area, where we would spend the morning searching for our missing target species. We started off at a river crossing near the small village itself, which gave us the hoped for **Bennett's Woodpecker** in record time (we had the bird a few seconds after getting out the car). A nice flock of **Abdim's Storks** were also seen here, then we went road cruising for **Southern White-crowned Shrike**. The shrikes played hardball but, after a thorough search, we eventually tracked down a lovely **Southern White-crowned Shrike**. We also enjoyed many others in the process – **African Cuckoo** put on a glorious showing, **Brown Snake Eagles** perched up, large flocks of **Wattled Starlings** moved through the area, and a pair of **Great Sparrows** showed well. Soon it was time for us to head to the private Loodswaai Game Ranch, arriving in time for their opening. We immediately shot into the broad-leaved woodlands, where a displaying **Flappet Lark** gave us good looks, along with **Levaillant's Cuckoo** and **Red-headed Weaver**. The open grassy areas delivered a fine male **White-bellied Bustard** (of the local *barrowi* race), then we continued our search for **Bushveld Pipit** in the woodlands – one of our last remaining broad-leaved woodland specials. We bumped into numerous **Sabota Larks**, a superficially similar species, along the way and, with time running out, eventually found the goods and enjoyed excellent and prolonged looks at a secretive **Bushveld Pipit**. Content, we settled into the drive up to Polokwane, where we arrived in good time. We headed to the lovely Polokwane Game Reserve on the outskirts of town, where we spent the afternoon. Our main target here was the scarce **Short-clawed Lark**, which thanks to some good recent gen (thanks, Daniel!), we found a pair of birds that showed wonderfully! We enjoyed several other species we had already seen, along with a fine **Groundscraper Thrush** at the entrance gate. After an exciting few days in and around the Wider Gauteng area, we settled in for the evening, looking forward to what lay ahead.



Bushveld Pipit is a shy denizen of mixed woodland – it is uncommon and always difficult.

Day 17, 29th November 2024. Birding from Polokwane to Magoebaskloof

We awoke to a cold morning, with a bracing wind and overcast weather. We had one final target around Polokwane, **Tinkling Cisticola**, and found ourselves on the Polokwane plains, west of the city, first thing. Although the conditions were very miserable we easily located our target, with a male **Tinkling Cisticola** perched atop a tree, calling away. We didn't hang around, and were soon heading off for the Magoebaskloof mountains, where we would spend the next few days, bumping into some dry country birds like **Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark** and **Northern Black Korhaan** along the way. Taking back roads through the mountains, we arrived at our first forest patch and warmed up over some coffee and breakfast (and a quick clothing change).

Once suitably warmed up, we set about birding, and raked up our targets bit by bit. A lovely pair of **Olive Bushshrikes** showed well, as did skulking **Yellow-streaked Greenbuls** and **White-starred Robins**. Some more open areas held **Drakensberg Prinia**, **Sweet Waxbill** and **Greater Double-collared Sunbird**. Birds like **African Emerald Cuckoo**, **Knysna Turaco**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler** and **Chorister Robin-Chat** took some time to track down, but showed in the end. Our main highlight was finding a superb **Black-fronted Bushshrike**, showing at eye level – we couldn't have asked for better views! We worked our way to our lovely guesthouse in the afternoon, where a walk around the grounds gave us far better looks at **Chorister Robin-Chat**, along with the shy **Barratt's Warbler**. **Orange Ground Thrush** frustrated us by calling but remaining out of sight, no matter what we tried. On cue, in the early evening and sunset, several small flocks of the rare **Cape Parrot** came flying overhead.



*Forest birding was a pleasant change, and brought us many new birds, like this **Olive Bushshrike**.*

Day 18, 30th November 2024. Birding around Tzaneen and Magoebaskloof

We made use of local bird guide, David, for our full day in this exciting area. We started off the morning by taking a drive to the private lands east of Tzaneen, where we would try for more lowveld specials. We had a superb morning, notching up over 100 species in just a few hours, and finding many of our targets. As soon as we set foot on site, we immediately found our first target, **Arnot's Chat** – a pair jumping around the tall Mopane trees they love. A wide range of other bushveld species were around, including various hornbills, bee-eaters, kingfishers, barbets, woodpeckers, cuckooshrikes, thrushes, scrub robins, flycatchers and sunbirds. We paused at the African Wild Dog pens (this particular property is involved in reintroducing the dogs back into the wild) – where the dogs showed well, along with a wide range of raptors that come for the food scraps. **Hooded** and **White-backed Vultures** were common, while also around were **Martial** and **Wahlberg's Eagles**, **African Fish Eagle**, **Yellow-billed Kite** and **Common Buzzard**. Honorary raptor, **Marabou Storks**, were also evident. Riverine areas around the dam held the likes of **Purple-crested Turaco**, **Grey-headed Bushshrike** and **Greater Blue-eared Starling**, while some denser Mopane trees finally gave us an excitable **Stierling's Wren-Warbler** and a shy flock of **Retz's Helmetshrikes** (with **White-crested Helmetshrikes** intermixed as well). The dam itself was full of birds and gave us some scarce species like **Greater Painted-snipe**, amongst others.



Arnot's Chat is a difficult bird in South Africa, and was one of our main targets for the morning.

We took a late breakfast stop after a very productive walk around, then resumed – now only searching for very uncommon species like White-breasted Cuckooshrike (a very uncommon and low density species in South Africa). We were unable to find this species, but did enjoy others like **Dark Chanting Goshawk** and **Purple Roller**, along with **Yellow-bellied Eremomela** and an excellent **Western Barn Owl** oddly perched in the open. On our way back to Magoebaskloof, we

paused in Tzaneen town at some feeders at private houses and found our wanted **Magpie Mannikins**. Several **Purple-crested Turacos** were seen, as well as others like **Collared Sunbird**, **Holub's Golden Weaver** and **Dusky Indigobird**. We spent the afternoon focused on the forests of Magoebaskloof, looking for the few species we needed. **Orange Ground Thrush** was first up, and showed right on cue – though it took a bit of patient waiting for it to come into the open nicely for all of us. A small party of **Green Twinspots** played hardball, showing well, but briefly, while **Knysna Turacos** bounded in the treetops, showing nicely. **Brown Scrub Robin** was another bird we had heard regularly, but not been able to see, and it took a herculean effort with a vocal bird that eventually popped out into the open for brief views. A final wait for **Cape Parrots** produced the birds only high in the sky, but with a supporting cast of **African Yellow Warbler**, **Cape Grassbird**, **Forest Canary** and **Amethyst Sunbird** from the surrounds. We settled in for dinner after a long, but successful day out – thanks, David!



Orange Ground Thrush gave us some incredible views after quite some effort – this is a very shy and retiring bird and is always a challenge to see well.

Day 19, 1st December 2024. Transfer to Dullstroom

We started off the morning with a quick dash into the Magoebaskloof forests once more, where we set about trying for the exceedingly rare Striped Flufftail. We had a few stops along the way for some perched **Cape Parrots** (finally), and a large flock of **Green Twinspots** and **Black-and-white** (Red-backed) **Mannikins**. Try as we might, we were unable to pick up on any calling Striped Flufftails, though we did find other species like **Drakensberg Prinia**, **Wailing Cisticola**, **Yellow Bishop** and **African Firefinch**. We also had a fabulous **Jackal Buzzard** pass low overhead. With the sun out, and day warming up, we called it here, and made our way to the New Agatha Bat Hawk nest. We had some comedic stuff temporarily block the way, as some stuck logging vehicles

(including an ultra-maneuverable beast of a vehicle) quickly cut a new road through the vegetation. Once at the **Bat Hawk** site, we found the expected pair with little hassle, and enjoyed some good views in the end (after finding the best gap through the trees and leaves). We then settled in for the long drive to Dullstroom, with stops along the way for birds like our first **Southern Bald Ibis**, **Cape Vulture** and lovely **White-winged Widowbirds**.

We arrived on the back roads outside Dullstroom, and found a **Gurney's Sugarbird** at our first point of asking. Good photos required a scramble uphill to the proteas the bird was frequenting and, after a bit of effort, we were rewarded with great looks. A quick run through the Verloren Vallei Nature Reserve, en-route to our lovely guesthouse, produced most of our targets! **Buff-streaked Chat** and **Sentinel Rock Thrush** showed well early on, before we bumped into a fine **Eastern Long-billed Lark** right next to the road. We also did well to pick up two shy **Red-winged Francolins** in the grass. We checked into our guesthouse, had a short rest, then set off again, bound for the Dullstroom Nature Reserve just outside town. Here we made our way up the rocky trail and waited in the evening for the resident **Cape Eagle Owls** to come out. Right on cue we picked up on a bird perched up on a rock and enjoyed some good scope views, before the owl took flight and headed out for the night. Others like **Buff-streaked Chat** and **Gurney's Sugarbird** were also seen while we waited. With darkness coming on, we made our way back down the trail and into town for a lovely dinner. Following our meal, we headed off on a night drive, which produced an excellent **African Grass Owl**.



Buff-streaked Chat is a handsome endemic of the mountainous grassland belt in eastern South Africa. Fortunately, they are common around Dullstroom, and we enjoyed some good sightings.

Day 20, 2nd December 2024. Dullstroom to Wakkerstroom

After yesterday's successful evening, we enjoyed a productive few hours of birding around the Verloren Vallei Nature Reserve early this morning. Our main target was **Yellow-breasted Pipit**, and the area was relatively full up with them, with several birds actively displaying, and several more seen feeding in the short grass next to the road. Most of the other grassland specials were evident as well, and we picked up on **Denham's Bustard**, **Blue Crane**, **Eastern Long-billed Lark**, **Buff-streaked** and **Mountain Chats**, and even a surprise grouping of **Cuckoo-finches**, amongst others. We had our first try for Black-winged Lapwing, but came up empty handed, before intense winds and lots of dust drove us to a rare sit-down breakfast. Following a hearty meal, we settled in for the drive to Wakkerstroom, where we arrived in good time shortly after midday. We checked into our guesthouse and had a bit of a rest before our afternoon birding excursion. We headed off to some distant thicket areas, where we would try for Bush Blackcap primarily. We enjoyed a few birds like **South African Cliff Swallow** and **Southern Bald Ibis** along the way, and we thought we were in for a hard afternoon, with the wind having not died down at all and still blowing away. Fortunately, though, we found an extremely confiding **Bush Blackcap** almost immediately and enjoyed wonderful views as it clung onto its branch. We also enjoyed an **Olive Bushshrike** here, a scarce species in this area, while the surrounds gave us the likes of **Drakensberg Prinia**, **Cape Crow** and **Malachite Sunbird**. We also heard numerous **Barratt's Warblers** but, try as we might, we couldn't lure any into the open.



Yellow-breasted Pipits were on full show around Dullstroom.

Day 21, 3rd December 2024. Endemic birding around Wakkerstroom

We met up early in the morning with local birding guide, David Nkosi, for our day out hunting for the many grassland endemics. Rather sadly, some of Wakkerstroom's core targets - Botha's and

Rudd's Larks - have experienced massive declines recently, and there were no sightings in recent months, which is very concerning. Nonetheless, we set out in the morning, bound for the Groenvlei hills south of town. This was where Rudd's Larks used to be seen, and we had a long walk through their former haunts, hoping. Sadly, as expected, we were unable to find any Rudd's Larks, but we did get wonderful views of the scarce **African Rock Pipit**, and enjoyed several close-up looks at the snazzy **Pale-crowned Cisticola**. It was a birdy morning, with lots out and about – a stately **Secretarybird** strolled through the grasslands, while the likes of **Sentinel Rock Thrushes**, **Eastern Long-billed Larks** and comical **Ant-eating Chats** perched on the roadside fences. The many displaying **Long-tailed Widowbirds** were also thoroughly enjoyed, as was a large flock of **Southern Bald Ibis**. We headed out to the grasslands north of town, where we quickly found a **Blue Korhaan** – another special. Although this bird was in the distance, we enjoyed great scope views as it slowly wandered about.



*It is always a thrill coming across a **Secretarybird** strolling through the grasslands.*

We continued on our way, exploring former haunts of both Rudd's and Botha's Larks – arranging access to private farms and walking through the fields. Alas! All our efforts were in vain and we didn't come across either of these two species. A flock of flighty **Black-winged Lapwings** was found, as were several **Pink-billed Larks** and a few **Grey Crowned Cranes** and a flock of **Blue Cranes** – amongst many other grassland species. Around midday we headed off to the Zaaihoek Dam area, where a few waterbirds like **Goliath Heron** were found, and we enjoyed the breeding **Southern Bald Ibis** on the dam wall. A quick stop at a small wetland near town produced a few **African Snipes** – which we saw well on the ground. We enjoyed a break in the midday heat, before venturing out in the late afternoon to focus on the main Wakkerstroom wetland and its surrounds. We focused our early efforts on **Red-winged Francolin**, and found a vocal bird right next to the road, though hidden in the long grass. It was remarkable how invisible the bird was and we

eventually found its head peeking through the grass, before the bird flushed away. The wetlands were a hive of activity and, apart from the many ducks, we enjoyed brief sightings of the scarce **African Rail**, while **African Swampheens** were a bit bolder. The treed areas held several **Black-crowned Night Herons**, which became active late in the day, while the shallows held a wide range of other herons, including **Squacco Heron**, **Yellow-billed Egret** and **African Spoonbill**. A vast flock of swifts and swallows fed over the water, and we enjoyed great views of **Common** and **African Black Swifts**, along with several other species. A pair of **Grey Crowned Cranes** put on an excellent show, parading around next to the road.

Day 22, 4th December 2024. Rudd's Lark and long drive to Hluhluwe

We came up with a rather crazy and audacious attempt at getting Rudd's Lark today. This involved a long drive (in the opposite direction from where we were heading) to Memel, where Rudd's Larks are present on the private lands in the area, then backtracking and making our way to our end point, Hluhluwe. This would result in a very long day of driving, but well worth it for a chance at the mega Rudd's Lark. We left Wakkerstroom early, arrived at our Memel site in good time (having pre-arranged access with the farmers), and heard a displaying **Rudd's Lark** as soon as we stepped out the car. It was a misty morning and it took a while to track the bird down, but we eventually picked up on the bird at its ground perch – and that immediately made all the driving worthwhile. We spent a bit of time with the bird, soaking up our views of this Endangered species and, with some patience (and blind luck), had the most incredible encounters as well. The dramatic **Long-tailed Widowbirds** continued to distract us while bright **Yellow-crowned Bishops** were also evident. Fine male **Lesser Kestrels** showed well on the roadside wires, while **Pale-crowned Cisticolas** were numerous – but little else new was about.



*The bird that made all the driving worthwhile – the mega **Rudd's Lark**!*

With our early morning birding done, we settled in for the long drive, arriving at our Hluhluwe lodge in the late afternoon – where we immediately found a small covey of **Southern Crested Guineafowls**.

Day 23, 5th December 2024. Zululand birding around Hluhluwe

Unlike yesterday, we didn't have very far to go today, and set off on an early morning walk right from our lodge. The property is located within a small reserve, which it has access to, and provides some excellent sand forest – giving us a chance at virtually all of our targets. A calling **Eastern Nicator** was first up and we were able to track it down in its large tree thicket – and watched it calling for a while. A vocal **Gorgeous Bushshrike** taunted us, and frustratingly remained out of sight, while the localized **Rudd's Apalis** was common and showed superbly. The sought-after **Pink-throated Twinspot** put up quite a challenge, and we had to work hard to get views – but we were eventually able to lure in a pair that stayed for a short while. We had excellent views! Just as all this was happening, we picked up on the faint calls of a **Neergaard's Sunbird**, and had a responsive male come right in on cue – this can be one of the more challenging specials to find, so we were thrilled. We weren't done yet, as further good birds like **Woodward's Batis**, **Southern Yellow White-eye**, **Grey Sunbird**, **Bearded Scrub Robin** and **Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird** all showed in turn.



Neergaard's Sunbird is one of Zululand's most sought-after, and more challenging specials to find. We found an obliging male, and couldn't have asked for better views!

Of course, as this was our first birding in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region, with its vastly different birdlife, we added a number of new birds to our list as well, as more widespread species were seen. Everything ranging from **Crowned** and **Trumpeter Hornbills**, to the tiny **African Pygmy**

Kingfisher, noisy **White-eared Barbets**, **Green-backed Camaroptera**, **Yellow-breasted Apalis**, **Black-bellied Starling** and **Dark-backed Weaver**, to mention a few. We then ventured off to the nearby Mpempe Pan, where our main target would be the scarce **Lemon-breasted Canary**. Soon after arriving into their favored Ilala Palm savannah, we found our target, with a showy male giving us extended views. We then sought some shade and had breakfast, as the temperature (and humidity) rose rapidly. We had a quick scan of the impressive wetlands and pans here (and others in the area) giving us some scarcer wetland birds like **White-backed Duck**, **African Pygmy Goose** and **Pink-backed Pelican**, amongst others. The plains held large flocks of **Black-winged Lapwings** while many **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** hawked over them. With the temperatures now around 40° Celsius, we sought shelter back at our lodge, where we enjoyed an extended break in the comfort of our air-conditioned rooms. We resumed late in the afternoon, once things had cooled down marginally, walking around the lodge again. We were able to lure one of the shy **Gorgeous Bushshrikes** into view, briefly, and enjoyed several other species we had seen already, like **Square-tailed Drongo**, **Rudd's Apalis** and **Eastern Nicator**, amongst others – but little else was moving about, and we soon called it for the day.



Woodward's Batis is another sought-after Zululand special we had superb views of.

Day 24, 6th December 2024. Zululand birding and transfer to St Lucia

We awoke this morning to find Marcel rather poorly – and made plans to visit a doctor for a suspicious-looking “bite” – the earliest appointment we could get was mid-morning. Marcel was OK to head out birding until then, and so we headed out. We rejigged our morning plans to work around the doctor appointment, and found ourselves firstly stopping briefly at the Muzi Pans, where we would try for a few scarce birds. The hoped-for Allen's Gallinule didn't materialize, but some careful spotting picked up a dainty **Lesser Jacana** amongst the many **African Jacanas**. Lots

of other waterbirds were around, including many **African Pygmy Goose** – this still being an uncommon and scarce bird in South Africa. A fine **Black Sparrowhawk** came hunting overhead, while the reedbeds gave us a confiding **Rufous-winged Cisticola**. We then made our way up to the stunning Lake Sibaya, where we took a walk around the remaining marshland and grassland on its shores. Here we found our target, **Rosy-throated Longclaw**, fairly easily and, although it took a while to get some good views, we managed to do so in the end. Other birds like **Broad-billed Roller**, **Croaking Cisticola** and **Yellow-throated Longclaw** were also seen. It was then time for our doctor's appointment, where Marcel had a case of tick-bite fever – and was immediately put on appropriate meds. After talking through options, we agreed to continue our birding, before eventually making our way to the quaint St Lucia village in the afternoon – a short drive, so we had time available. A stop at the Mpempe Pan plains added **Senegal Lapwing** to our list but, try as we might, again none of the rare Caspian Plovers could be found. We then called in on the Mkhuze River, where we undertook a walk in the now sweltering midday heat – fortunately it was shaded. It took a little bit of exploring to get onto the correct trail and, just as we were about to give up, we stumbled onto our quarry – **Pel's Fishing Owl**. The birds didn't hang around long, giving us some brief, but great, looks before melting away deeper into the forest. After enjoying some much-deserved lunch, we made the trip to **St Lucia**, pausing at the bridge over the estuary. As usual, the weavers delighted us all, with the antics of the breeding **Southern Brown-throated**, **Lesser Masked**, **Eastern Golden** and **Thick-billed Weavers** all giving us a good showing. A quick jaunt out after dinner gave us our hoped-for **Swamp Nightjar**, which gave us a good flyby before melting back into the night.



*We were delighted when our midday walk on the Mhuze River produced our much-desired **Pel's Fishing Owl**. We found an incredible three birds, including this immature bird (which can be told by its much paler head). Photo © Brad Hacker (tour participant).*

Day 25, 7th December 2024. Birding the Isimangaliso Wetland Park

We had a full day at our disposal as we set off to explore the vast Isimangaliso Wetland Park – because we had some time to kill before its gates opened, we headed off to the always wonderful iGwalagwala Trail running around the town. We had an exciting morning, as we found a very confiding **Livingstone's Turaco** early into the walk – this being a big target of the area. **Green Malkohas** were heard frequently, and took a while to track down – but we eventually got some good views, as well as a bird perched up, likewise with the stunning **African Emerald Cuckoo**. We enjoyed excellent views of **Brown Scrub Robin**, far improving on our views earlier in the trip, while other species were also seen, like **Red-capped Robin-Chat**, **Purple-banded Sunbird** and **Spectacled Weaver**. The tame **Southern Crested Guineafowls** were seen around town, then we headed into the park itself – on the Eastern Shores.

Our first target was the locally rare **Rufous-bellied Heron**, which took a while to find but eventually showed, then we took a drive to look for **Southern Banded Snake-Eagle**. As if right on cue, we picked up on this special bird as well (well spotted, Simon), before heading for our picnic breakfast. We had done well with our targets, and birded the rest of the morning looking for some of the outstanding species, before returning to our guesthouse for a midday break. Our afternoon was spent exploring the Western Shores section of the park, where we focused on the sandforest segments. We bettered our views of **Gorgeous Bushshrike** here, and enjoyed incredible views of **Livingstone's Turaco**, with a bird perched in the open and calling its heart out for ages. A drive back through the park at dusk didn't produce any night birds, while a quick jaunt out after dinner gave us the hoped-for “townies” a resident pod of **Hippos** that came and fed on the grassy lawns of the homes in the town.



*Watching this **Livingstone's Turaco** perched at eye level, and calling away just a few meters from us was a wonderful sighting. We ended up walking away from this bird, as it carried on calling.*

Day 26, 8th December 2024. Birding from St Lucia to Eshowe

The early morning found us out on the iGwalagwala Trail once more, with our main target being the shy **Buff-spotted Flufftail**. There were lots of birds out and about, with many of the same species as we had yesterday present once more. We tried for the flufftail in a few spots without any luck, until we finally had a response. It took a little while, trying various angles and pathways through the dense thickets, but finally we found the ‘right’ pathway and, just like that, we enjoyed wonderful (albeit, typically brief flufftail) views as a male crossed the pathway a few times. We refocused on the more open forests nearer the river, which eventually produced a pair of **Black-throated Wattle-eyes** after a long search. Just as we were settling in for breakfast, a faint whistle drew our attention away from the food (and coffee), and towards the calling **Grey Waxbill**. We located the bird quickly, and enjoyed sublime views of this awesome bird.



*When seen well, **Grey Waxbill** is an all-round stunning bird!*

Content after a successful morning, we made the short trip down to Eshowe, stopping at the St Lucia bridge once again for the fine weaver spectacle. We arrived early and checked into our lovely guesthouse, right on the edge of the Dlinza Forest, before enjoying a short rest during the midday heat. Later in the afternoon we ventured into this lovely forest, complete with its aerial boardwalk. Our main target was the tricky Spotted Ground Thrush, which is resident here, but can often be rather elusive. A false alarm early on went to a **Chorister Robin-Chat** that hopped across the pathway, then we found the real deal, with an excellent **Spotted Ground Thrush** hopping along a small clearing. We all got onto the bird before it hopped deeper in, after some careful positioning we had the bird hopping out in front of us again – everyone getting superb views. We then proceeded up the canopy tower, where we’d try for the rare Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon as the day came to a close. **African Olive Pigeons** were seen flying by here and there, getting all of our

hearts going, while a **Black Sparrowhawk** came chasing through at one point, along with a hulking **Trumpeter Hornbill**. We did well to pick up a few birds like **Grey Cuckooshrike** from the tower, before we heard our **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon** calling from the distance. Try as we might, we couldn't get any closer, and hadn't seen it by the time we had to leave.

Day 27, 9th December 2024. Birding the forests of Eshowe and Mtunzini

We were up the canopy tower at the Dlinza Forest first thing in the morning, and were duly rewarded with several **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeons** calling about. Some dedicated scanning eventually paid off, as we located a male bird perched up in the distance. We spent a little while on the tower hoping to get the birds a bit closer and, while we saw several birds during our time, they were all a bit distant (though we had good views in the scope). We also met up with local birding guide, Junior, here – and he took us out for the morning. After our good success with the pigeon we shot off for the Ongoye Forest, where the localized population of **Green Barbet** was our main target. Fortunately, they were breeding near the office and we heard a barbet calling as soon as we stepped out the car, and found the bird perched up. It was sadly very misty, so our views were rather obstructed. We elected to rather stop for breakfast, and hope the mist would clear – which it did, just as we'd hoped. We far improved on our views of this scarce species!



*It's always a firm highlight when one gets a good sighting of **Gorgeous Bushshrike**.*

We didn't dally further and were soon off, bound for the Mtunzini area. An opportunistic stop on the road gave us incredible views of the most confiding **Gorgeous Bushshrike** I've seen – just stunning. We soon arrived in some quiet coastal grasslands, where we headed off to the reedbeds which produced the hoped-for **Red-headed Quelea**. We then took a walk through the grass, where we flushed up a **Swamp Nightjar**, getting some daytime views of this species, while a **Palm-nut**

Vulture flew over nearby. Our last stop for the morning was at Umlalazi Nature Reserve, where we tried for the difficult Black Coucal, though we were early in the season. After a good walk, scan and general look around, the blazing sun and extreme heat and humidity got to us, and we elected to call it a morning, heading back for lunch at our guesthouse. Following a short afternoon siesta, we rounded off the day with another walk through the Dlinza Forest, where we picked up birds like **Black Cuckoo**, **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, **Olive Woodpecker** and **Ashy Flycatcher**, and enjoyed repeat views of **Spotted Ground Thrush** once more – along with point blank views of the tiny **Blue Duiker**.

Day 28, 10th December 2024. Blue Swallows en-route to Underberg

We had been amazingly successful on the trip with regards to all the feasible targets, and our early morning found us down at the Umlalazi Nature Reserve grasslands, where we'd try for Black Coucal once again. There were lots of birds out and about, but sadly no coucal, despite a few hours of trying. We did enjoy multiple **Burchell's Coucals**, and the likes of **African Marsh Harrier**, **African Woolly-necked Stork**, **Little Bee-eater**, **Rufous-winged Cisticola** and stunning **Fan-tailed Widowbirds** and bright **Yellow-throated Longclaws**, before heading for breakfast on the river. Here, we had to keep our wits about us, as naughty **Vervet Monkeys** kept us on our toes, but a fine pair of **Half-collared Kingfishers** made up for it.



*A mesmeric **Blue Swallow** glides over its grasslands – a rare South African species.*

Soon we were off, barreling towards the Drakensberg Mountains – where we'd spend two nights. The rare (and Critically Endangered in South Africa) **Blue Swallow** occurs in the mist-belt grasslands along the way, and we dedicated the rest of the day to seeing this bird. These birds are actively monitored and sites are generally controlled – we had arranged to visit one site. Although

we only arrived in the late morning, the time of day isn't as vital with swallows as it is with other species. Armed with sun block and wide brimmed hats, we ventured off to the open grasslands to try for them. A single pair of birds breed here, but range widely over the surrounds and come and go infrequently – it's essentially a waiting game. We picked a suitable spot and waited. After an hour or so, having some close calls with **Barn Swallows** and **Black Saw-wings** in the distance, we first heard a **Blue Swallow**, then promptly found one – though it didn't stick around for long and soon disappeared. It soon came back and put on a great show for us. Slightly sunburnt, but satisfied, we broke for lunch in the shade. We headed over to Underberg and checked into our guesthouse, overlooking the imposing Drakensberg Mountains. We went off on an afternoon drive in the area. This area is one of the hotspots locally for **Wattled Cranes**, another Critically Endangered bird (in South Africa) – and we did well to find two of the resident pairs on our drive – one of which had a large chick in tow. We also found a **Red-necked Spurfowl** which showed well, crossing the road just in front of us. It was another birdy afternoon with many birds seen – further highlights included **Long-crested Eagle**, **Jackal Buzzard**, **Pale-crowned Cisticola** and several bright and colorful widowbirds and bishops. We settled in for the evening, with great anticipating for our day up the famous Sani Pass tomorrow.



*The strange **Ground Woodpecker** showed well in the Drakensberg Mountains.*

Day 29, 11th December 2024. Drakensberg endemics on Sani Pass

Our highly anticipated day going up Sani Pass and into Lesotho had arrived, and we were met by local guide Stuart early in the morning. Given that this was near the end of the trip, we had seen some of the more widespread targets that are possible here, and focused our efforts on the new species. The lower slopes produced our first **Ground Woodpecker** of the day, along with other more widespread species like **Red-throated Wryneck**, **Drakensberg Prinia**, **Cape Rock Thrush**

and **Buff-streaked Chat**. We also found a group of **Horus Swifts** and a nice **Bush Blackcap**. Wanting to head higher up before it got too warm, we were soon on the upper slopes and ran into a nice covey of **Grey-winged Francolins**. Once we got up to the top, and into Lesotho, we raked up the main specials. A small group of **Drakensberg Rockjumpers** were bounding away at the border post, and gave us excellent views, while **Drakensberg Siskin** were common and flitted about off the roadside. Deeper into Lesotho, a few roadside stops produced more karoo-oriented birds, like **Large-billed Lark**, **Sickle-winged Chat**, **Karoo Prinia** and **Grey Tit**, before we heard another of our main targets, **Mountain Pipit**. We soon located the bird and enjoyed good views on the ground and as it displayed overhead. We stopped at the **Bearded Vulture** nest, and enjoyed good, albeit distant, looks at this bird, before a few more individuals were seen in flight over the area. We also finally got prolonged views of **Ground Woodpeckers**, and also found several stunning **Black-headed Canaries** – another species we had battled for views earlier on the trip. Having cleaned up on our species higher up, we headed down to the lower slopes, where we lucked into a **Barratt's Warbler** hopping about in the open – giving us all excellent views! A bit of weather started coming in, and we enjoyed a restful afternoon.



*A fine **Barratt's Warbler** view capped off our day on Sani Pass. One rarely gets such good views of this master skulker. Photo © Brad Hacker (tour participant).*

We had an early dinner and, fortunately, the weather seemed to settle – we had some birding planned after dinner. We had arranged access to a property that had a vast wetland system in the mountains, and occasionally has Striped Flufftail. We gave it a good crack here, and elsewhere in the surrounds, but remained luckless on this front. We did enjoy an excellent **Spotted Eagle Owl** sighting, while we heard **Cape Eagle Owls** calling deeper into the hills as well.

Day 30, 12th December 2024. Long drive to the South Coast

We could scarcely believe it – this was the penultimate day of the trip already. We began the morning birding the roads in the broader Underberg area, trying for rare Red-footed Falcons that rarely join the Amur Falcons. It was early in the season and we found the first **Amur Falcons** of the season having just arrived from their northeast Asian haunts. Try as we might, we couldn't turn any of the Amur's into the similar Red-footed Falcon. This was again a birdy morning, with other highlights going to **Lanner Falcon**, **Grey Crowned Cranes** and **Red-necked Spurfowl**. We then settled in for the long drive to the Kwa-Zulu Natal south coast. We paused at the Ingeli Forest for breakfast but didn't spend much time here, not needing any targets. Our first stop would be some private land on the coast – maintained by a local birder, Stan. Stan has amazingly converted previous farmland into an exciting network of wetlands and dams, and routinely attracts some exciting birds. Our main target was **Allen's Gallinule**, and it was all too easy with Stan having staked it out for our arrival. We got out the car, greeted Stan, and he pointed to the **Allen's Gallinule**. We spent a bit of time enjoying it from one of his hides, before doing a walk around the area. We had excellent looks at several other waterbirds, including **White-backed Duck**, **Black Crake** and **African Jacana**, all at point blank, before enjoying some coffee and biscuits with Stan in his home.



*We were elated when we found our final major target – **Knysna Woodpecker**!*

As we were getting ready to depart, a faint whistle had us all running back to the treeline for the calling **Knysna Woodpecker**. We located the bird sitting at the top of some dead trees, and had excellent and prolonged views – one of our last remaining target birds! We left the woodpecker as it was, and headed inland to the Umtamvuna Nature Reserve. Here, we would walk around the rocky escarpments in the hope of finding a roosting Freckled Nightjar, which occurs here. We had

been fortunate with the weather so far this morning, being wonderful and overcast – but as we arrived at the reserve, it started looking decidedly bleaker. We gave it a shot, even though the reserve staff thought we were crazy for even thinking about it and, much to our delight, flushed a **Freckled Nightjar** from the first set of rocks we tried. We were able to flush it once more, but couldn't locate it on the ground, with the bird disappearing behind all the massive rocks – leaving us all wanting a bit more. Unfortunately, the adverse weather set in, it started raining and by the time we made it back to the car, we were all soaked. We continued up the coast to our overnight in the lovely Umdoni Park, where we settled in for the afternoon, and enjoyed our final dinner together – reminiscing over the trip and all the many and excellent birds we'd seen.



*A wonderful spectacle of **Narina Trogons**, amongst others, at Oribi Gorge on our final day rounded off the trip in style.*

Day 31, 13th December 2024. Departure from Durban

With the weather still rainy and miserable, carrying over from yesterday, we headed out rather cautiously to Oribi Gorge for a quick spell of morning birding. This worked out well, as the weather was marginally better inland, and we had a superb few hours of birding around this scenic and spectacular area. Our first stop produced some excellent **Knysna Turacos** all sitting atop a dead tree drying out, complete with several **Trumpeter** and **Crowned Hornbills** and **Olive Woodpeckers**. As we birded along, we far improved our views of the shy **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler** and found another **Knysna Woodpecker**. As if that wasn't enough, a single **Narina Trogon** came into view (this was a species we had heard regularly throughout the eastern part of the tour, but hadn't tried for, as it wasn't a target, and there were always other more pressing birds to spend time on). This was followed by another and then another and, before we knew it, we had more than half a dozen all flitting about.

Our final stop on the river produced our hoped-for **Mountain Wagtails**, then we called it and made our way back to our guesthouse. Once back, we gathered our things, prepared for everyone's departures and set off. The tour came to an end at the King Shaka Airport, following a fabulous five weeks of birding around South Africa.



*Typical Northern Cape scenes in the Pofadder district. In-situ Cape Eagle-Owl scanning.
Photo © Marcel Ashby (tour participant).*

I would like to thank Brad, Marcel and Simon for all the good times and exciting memories that we'll keep from this tour. This was a majorly successful tour, with loads of excellent, localized and rare birds being seen (and a few difficult nocturnal mammals as well). The various trips' top birds are too many and diverse to mention, but are all thoroughly conveyed in the above texts. Onwards and upwards to more exciting adventures.

Bird List - Following IOC 14.2

Birds 'heard only' are marked with (H) after the common name, all other species were seen.

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following the IUCN Red List:

CR = Critically Endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common name	Scientific name
Ostriches (Struthionidae)	
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
White-backed Duck	<i>Thalassornis leuconotus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
South African Shelduck	<i>Tadorna cana</i>
African Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>
Cape Shoveler	<i>Spatula smithii</i>
African Black Duck	<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
Maccoa Duck – EN	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
Guineafowl (Numididae)	
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Southern Crested Guineafowl	<i>Guttera edouardi</i>
Pheasants & Allies (Phasianidae)	
Crested Francolin	<i>Ortygornis sephaena</i>
Red-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila levaillantii</i>
Grey-winged Francolin	<i>Scleroptila afra</i>
Orange River Francolin	<i>Scleroptila gutturalis</i>
Shelley's Francolin	<i>Scleroptila shelleyi</i>
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Cape Spurrow	<i>Pternistis capensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Natal Spurrow	<i>Pternistis natalensis</i>
Swainson's Spurrow	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>
Red-necked Spurrow	<i>Pternistis afer</i>
Nightjars (Caprimulgidae)	
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>
Swamp Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus natalensis</i>
Freckled Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
African Black Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
Bradfield's Swift	<i>Apus bradfieldi</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Horus Swift	<i>Apus horus</i>
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>
Turacos (Musophagidae)	
Grey Go-away-bird	<i>Crinifer concolor</i>
Purple-crested Turaco	<i>Gallirex porphyreolophus</i>
Livingstone's Turaco	<i>Tauraco livingstonii</i>
Knysna Turaco	<i>Tauraco corythaix</i>
Bustards (Otididae)	
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Ludwig's Bustard – EN	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>
Denham's Bustard	<i>Neotis denhami</i>
White-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>
Blue Korhaan	<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>
Karoo Korhaan	<i>Heterotetrax vigorsii</i>
Red-crested Korhaan	<i>Lophotis ruficrista</i>
Southern Black Korhaan - VU	<i>Afrotis afra</i>
Northern Black Korhaan	<i>Afrotis afraoides</i>
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Burchell's Coucal	<i>Centropus burchellii</i>
Green Malkoha	<i>Ceuthmochares australis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>
Levaillant's Cuckoo	<i>Clamator levaillantii</i>
Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
Diederik Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
Sandgrouse (Pteroclididae)	
Namaqua Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>
Yellow-throated Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles gutturalis</i>
Double-banded Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles bicinctus</i>
Burchell's Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles burchelli</i>
Pigeons, Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
African Olive Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon	<i>Columba delegorguei</i>
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>
African Green Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>
Flufftails & Forest Rails (Scolothruridae)	
Buff-spotted Flufftail	<i>Scolothrura elegans</i>
Red-chested Flufftail	<i>Scolothrura rufa</i>
Rails, Crakes & Coots (Rallidae)	
African Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Allen's Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio alleni</i>

Common name	Scientific name
African Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio madagascariensis</i>
Black Crake	<i>Zapornia flavirostra</i>
Cranes (Gruidae)	
Grey Crowned Crane - EN	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
Wattled Crane – VU	<i>Grus carunculata</i>
Blue Crane – VU	<i>Grus paradisea</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>
Stone-curlews, Thick-knees (Burhinidae)	
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Oystercatchers (Haematopodidae)	
African Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>
Stilts, Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Plovers (Charadriidae)	
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Senegal Lapwing	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>
Black-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>
Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pecuarius</i>
Chestnut-banded Plover	<i>Anarhynchus pallidus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
White-fronted Plover	<i>Anarhynchus marginatus</i>
Painted-snipes (Rostratulidae)	
Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>
Jacanas (Jacanidae)	
Lesser Jacana	<i>Microparra capensis</i>
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Sandpipers, Snipes (Scolopacidae)	
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
African Snipe	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Couriers, Pratincoles (Glareolidae)	
Double-banded Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>
Temminck's Courser	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>
Burchell's Courser	<i>Cursorius rufus</i>
Black-winged Pratincole	<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Gulls, Terns, Skimmers (Laridae)	
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Damara Tern	<i>Sternula balaenarum</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Storks (Ciconiidae)	
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Abdim's Stork	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>
African Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia microscelis</i>
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Anhingas, Darters (Anhingidae)	
African Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>
Cormorants, Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Reed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>
Crowned Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo coronatus</i>
Cape Cormorant – EN	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>
Ibises, Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Southern Bald Ibis – VU	<i>Geronticus calvus</i>
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Hérons, Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Rufous-bellied Heron	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Ardea brachyrhyncha</i>
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Hamerkop (Scopidae)	
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
Secretarybird (Sagittariidae)	
Secretarybird – EN	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
Ospreys (Pandionidae)	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Kites, Hawks, Eagles (Accipitridae)	
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>
Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Hooded Vulture – CR	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
White-backed Vulture - CR	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Cape Vulture – VU	<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Southern Banded Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus fasciolatus</i>
Bat Hawk	<i>Macheiramphus alcinus</i>
Martial Eagle – EN	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus wahlbergi</i>
Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
Lizard Buzzard (H)	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>
Dark Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax metabates</i>
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax canorus</i>
African Goshawk	<i>Aerospiza tachiro</i>
Little Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza minulla</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Astur melanoleucus</i>
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>
Black Harrier – EN	<i>Circus maurus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>
African Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Jackal Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Barn Owls (Tytonidae)	
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
African Grass Owl	<i>Tyto capensis</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Southern White-faced Owl	<i>Ptilopsis granti</i>
Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis</i>
Cape Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo capensis</i>
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>
Pel's Fishing Owl	<i>Scotopelia peli</i>
Mousebirds (Coliidae)	
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
White-backed Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>
Red-faced Mousebird	<i>Urocolius indicus</i>
Trogon (Trogonidae)	
Narina Trogon	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Hoopoes (Upupidae)	
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Wood Hoopoes (Phoeniculidae)	
Green Wood Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Common Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
Hornbills (Bucerotidae)	
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus rufigrostris</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros alboterminatus</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>
Rollers (Coraciidae)	
Purple Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>
Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>
Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>
African Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>
Half-collared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Bee-eaters (Meropidae)	
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
African Barbets (Lybiidae)	
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>
Green Barbet	<i>Cryptolybia olivacea</i>
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
Southern Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>
Honeyguides (Indicatoridae)	
Brown-backed Honeybird	<i>Prodotiscus regulus</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide (H)	<i>Indicator indicator</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Red-throated Wryneck	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>
Ground Woodpecker	<i>Geocolaptes olivaceus</i>
Bennett's Woodpecker	<i>Campethera bennettii</i>
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Knysna Woodpecker	<i>Campethera notata</i>
Bearded Woodpecker (H)	<i>Chloropicus namaquus</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>
Caracaras, Falcons (Falconidae)	
Pygmy Falcon	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
Rock Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicolus</i>
Greater Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
African & New World Parrots (Psittacidae)	
Cape Parrot – VU	<i>Poicephalus robustus</i>
Old World Parrots (Psittaculidae)	
Rosy-faced Lovebird	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>
Wattle-eyes, Batises (Platysteiridae)	
Cape Batis	<i>Batis capensis</i>
Woodwards' Batis	<i>Batis fratum</i>
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>
Pririt Batis	<i>Batis pririt</i>
Black-throated Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira peltata</i>
Bushshrikes (Malaconotidae)	
Grey-headed Bushshrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
Black-fronted Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus nigrifrons</i>
Olive Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus olivaceus</i>
Orange-breasted Bushshrike	<i>Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus</i>
Gorgeous Bushshrike	<i>Telophorus viridis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Southern Boubou	<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>
Crimson-breasted Shrike	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Vangas & Allies (Vangidae)	
White-crested Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Retz's Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops retzii</i>
Cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae)	
Grey Cuckooshrike	<i>Cebilepyris caesius</i>
Black Cuckooshrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>
Figbirds, Old World Orioles, Piopios (Oriolidae)	
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Drongos (Dicruridae)	
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Monarchs (Monarchidae)	
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
Shrikes (Laniidae)	
Southern White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>
Magpie Shrike	<i>Lanius melanoleucus</i>
Southern Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Crows, Jays (Corvidae)	
Cape Crow	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Rockjumpers (Chaetopidae)	
Drakensberg Rockjumper	<i>Chaetops aurantius</i>
Fairy Flycatchers (Stenostiridae)	
Fairy Flycatcher	<i>Stenostira scita</i>
Tits, Chickadees (Paridae)	
Southern Black Tit	<i>Melaniparus niger</i>
Ashy Tit	<i>Melaniparus cinerascens</i>
Grey Tit	<i>Melaniparus afer</i>
Penduline Tits (Remizidae)	
Cape Penduline Tit	<i>Anthoscopus minutus</i>
Nicators (Nicatoridae)	
Eastern Nicator	<i>Nicator gularis</i>
Larks (Alaudidae)	
Spike-heeled Lark	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Short-clawed Lark	<i>Certhilauda chuana</i>
Karoo Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda subcoronata</i>
Eastern Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda semitorquata</i>
Cape Long-billed Lark	<i>Certhilauda curvirostris</i>
Black-eared Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix australis</i>
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>
Sabota Lark	<i>Calendulauda sabota</i>
Fawn-colored Lark	<i>Calendulauda africanoides</i>
Karoo Lark	<i>Calendulauda albescens</i>
Red Lark – VU	<i>Calendulauda burra</i>
Dune Lark	<i>Calendulauda erythrochlamys</i>
Rudd's Lark – EN	<i>Heteromiraфра ruddi</i>
Melodious Lark	<i>Miraфра cheniana</i>
Flappet Lark	<i>Amiraфра rufocinnamomea</i>
Cape Clapper Lark	<i>Corypha apiata</i>
Eastern Clapper Lark	<i>Corypha fasciolata</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Corypha africana</i>
Sclater's Lark	<i>Spizocorys sclateri</i>
Stark's Lark	<i>Spizocorys starki</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Pink-billed Lark	<i>Spizocorys conirostris</i>
Large-billed Lark	<i>Galerida magnirostris</i>
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)	
Sombre Greenbul	<i>Andropadus importunus</i>
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>
Terrestrial Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>
Yellow-streaked Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>
African Red-eyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>
Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>
Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>
Swallows, Martins (Hirundinidae)	
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psaltidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Banded Martin	<i>Neophedina cincta</i>
Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Large Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Blue Swallow – VU	<i>Hirundo atrocaerulea</i>
Pearl-breasted Swallow	<i>Hirundo dimidiata</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
White-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo albigularis</i>
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Greater Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis cucullata</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>
Red-breasted Swallow	<i>Cecropis semirufa</i>
South African Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon spilodera</i>
Crombecs, African Warblers (Macrosphenidae)	
Cape Grassbird	<i>Sphenoeacus afer</i>
Long-billed Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Leaf Warblers (Phylloscopidae)	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>
Reed Warblers & Allies (Acrocephalidae)	
Lesser Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Common Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Iduna natalensis</i>
Grassbirds & Allies (Locustellidae)	
Barratt's Warbler	<i>Bradypterus barratti</i>
Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>
Cisticolas & Allies (Cisticolidae)	
Rock-loving Cisticola	<i>Cisticola aberrans</i>
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Tinkling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola rufilatus</i>
Grey-backed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola subruficapilla</i>
Wailing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola lais</i>
Rufous-winged Cisticola	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>
Levaillant's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola tinniens</i>
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Neddicky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Desert Cisticola	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Cloud Cisticola	<i>Cisticola textrix</i>
Pale-crowned Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cinnamomeus</i>
Wing-snapping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Black-chested Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>
Karoo Prinia	<i>Prinia maculosa</i>
Drakensberg Prinia	<i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>
Namaqua Warbler	<i>Phragmacia substriata</i>
Bar-throated Apalis	<i>Apalis thoracica</i>
Rudd's Apalis	<i>Apalis ruddi</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flava</i>
Rufous-eared Warbler	<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>
Stierling's Wren-Warbler	<i>Calamonastes stierlingi</i>
Barred Wren-Warbler	<i>Calamonastes fasciolatus</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Warbler	<i>Euryptila subcinnamomea</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Green-capped Eremomela	<i>Eremomela scotops</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Karoo Eremomela	<i>Eremomela gregalis</i>
Burnt-necked Eremomela	<i>Eremomela usticollis</i>
Sylviid Babblers (Sylviidae)	
Bush Blackcap – VU	<i>Sylvia nigricapillus</i>
Layard's Warbler	<i>Curruca layardi</i>
Chestnut-vented Warbler	<i>Curruca subcoerulea</i>
White-eyes (Zosteropidae)	
Orange River White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops virens</i>
Southern Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops anderssoni</i>
Laughingthrushes & Allies (Leiothrichidae)	
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Southern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>
Sugarbirds (Promeropidae)	
Gurney's Sugarbird	<i>Promerops gurneyi</i>
Starlings, Rhabdornises (Sturnidae)	
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Notopholia corusca</i>
Cape Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Greater Blue-eared Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>
Burchell's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Pied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis bicolor</i>
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Pale-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus nabouroup</i>
Oxpeckers (Buphagidae)	
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Thrushes (Turdidae)	
Spotted Ground Thrush - VU	<i>Geokichla guttata</i>
Orange Ground Thrush	<i>Geokichla gurneyi</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Groundscraper Thrush	<i>Turdus litsitsirupa</i>
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>
Karoo Thrush	<i>Turdus smithi</i>
Chats, Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)	
Karoo Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas coryphoeus</i>
Brown Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas signata</i>
Bearded Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas quadrivirgata</i>
Kalahari Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas paena</i>
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Chat Flycatcher	<i>Agricola infuscatus</i>
Ashy Flycatcher	<i>Fraseria caerulescens</i>
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>
Marico Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis mariquensis</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat (H)	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Chorister Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha dichroa</i>
Red-capped Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>
White-throated Robin-Chat	<i>Dessonornis humeralis</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Dessonornis caffer</i>
Short-toed Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola brevipes</i>
Sentinel Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola explorator</i>
Cape Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rupestris</i>
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Buff-streaked Chat	<i>Campicoloides bifasciatus</i>
Karoo Chat	<i>Emarginata schlegelii</i>
Tractrac Chat	<i>Emarginata tractrac</i>
Sickle-winged Chat	<i>Emarginata sinuata</i>
Ant-eating Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>
Mountain Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla monticola</i>
Arnot's Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla arnotti</i>
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	<i>Oenanthe familiaris</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Sunbirds (Nectariniidae)	
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>
Grey Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra veroxii</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Southern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chalybeus</i>
Neergaard's Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris neergaardi</i>
Greater Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris afer</i>
Marico Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>
Purple-banded Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris bifasciatus</i>
White-bellied Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris talatala</i>
Dusky Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris fuscus</i>
Old World Sparrows, Snowfinches (Passeridae)	
Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris superciliaris</i>
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Great Sparrow	<i>Passer motitensis</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Weavers, Widowbirds (Ploceidae)	
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
Sociable Weaver	<i>Philetairus socius</i>
Scaly-feathered Weaver	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>
Eastern Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus subaureus</i>
Holub's Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>
Southern Brown-throated Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthopterus</i>
Lesser Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Southern Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Dark-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>
Red-headed Quelea	<i>Quelea erythrops</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Yellow-crowned Bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
Southern Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
White-winged Widowbird	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Long-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes progne</i>
Waxbills, Munias & Allies (Estrildidae)	
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullata</i>
Magpie Mannikin	<i>Spermestes fringilloides</i>
Black-and-white Mannikin	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>
Swee Waxbill	<i>Coccygia melanotis</i>
Green Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>
Black-faced Waxbill	<i>Brunhilda erythronotos</i>
Grey Waxbill	<i>Glaucostrelda perreini</i>
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>
Red-headed Finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>
Orange-breasted Waxbill	<i>Amandava subflava</i>
Violet-eared Waxbill	<i>Granatina granatina</i>
Blue Waxbill	<i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>
Pink-throated Twinspot	<i>Hypargos margaritatus</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Indigobirds, Whydahs (Viduidae)	
Village Indigobird	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>
Purple Indigobird	<i>Vidua purpurascens</i>
Dusky Indigobird	<i>Vidua funerea</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Shaft-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua regia</i>
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Cuckoo-finch	<i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>
Wagtails, Pipits (Motacillidae)	
Cape Wagtail	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Mountain Wagtail	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Cape Longclaw	<i>Macronyx capensis</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Rosy-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx ameliae</i>
African Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Mountain Pipit	<i>Anthus hoeschi</i>
Nicholson's Pipit	<i>Anthus nicholsoni</i>
Buffy Pipit	<i>Anthus vaalensis</i>
Plain-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>
Striped Pipit	<i>Anthus lineiventris</i>
African Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus crenatus</i>
Short-tailed Pipit	<i>Anthus brachyurus</i>
Bushveld Pipit	<i>Anthus caffer</i>
Yellow-breasted Pipit - VU	<i>Anthus chloris</i>
Finches, Euphonias (Fringillidae)	
Forest Canary	<i>Crithagra scotops</i>
Black-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra atrogularis</i>
Lemon-breasted Canary	<i>Crithagra citrinpectus</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Crithagra mozambica</i>
Cape Siskin	<i>Crithagra totta</i>
Drakensberg Siskin	<i>Crithagra symonsi</i>
Yellow Canary	<i>Crithagra flaviventris</i>
Streaky-headed Seedeater	<i>Crithagra gularis</i>
White-throated Canary	<i>Crithagra albogularis</i>
Protea Canary	<i>Crithagra leucoptera</i>
Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
Black-headed Canary	<i>Serinus alario</i>
Buntings (Emberizidae)	
Lark-like Bunting	<i>Emberiza impetواني</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>
Cape Bunting	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>
Species seen:	547
Species heard:	4
Total species recorded:	551

Mammal List – Following Mammalwatching.com (Jan. 2024)

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following the

IUCN Red List:

EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable.

Common name	Scientific name
Aardvarks (Orycteropodidae)	
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>
Hyraxes (Procaviidae)	
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)	
Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>
Chacma Baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Galagos (Galagidae)	
Thick-tailed Greater Galago (H)	<i>Otolemur crassicaudatus</i>
Hares and Rabbits (Leporidae)	
Cape Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>
Scrub Hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Old World Porcupines (Hystricidae)	
Cape Porcupine	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>
Dassie Rats (Petromuridae)	
Noki	<i>Petromus typicus</i>
Squirrels (Sciuridae)	
Smith's Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Red Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus palliatus</i>
South African Ground Squirrel	<i>Geosciurus inauris</i>
Springhares (Pedetidae)	
Southern African Springhare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>
Old World Mice and Rats (Muridae)	
West-central Four-striped Grass Rat	<i>Rhabdomys bechuanae</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Xeric Four-striped Grass Rat	<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>
Sloggett's Vlei Rat	<i>Otomys sloggetti</i>
Karoo Vlei Rat	<i>Otomys unisulcatus</i>
Brants's Whistling Rat	<i>Parotomys brantsii</i>
Eared Seals (Otariidae)	
Afro-Australian Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>
Canids (Canidae)	
Black-backed Jackal	<i>Lupulella mesomelas</i>
Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>
Cape Fox	<i>Vulpes chama</i>
Felids (Felidae)	
African Wildcat	<i>Felis lybica</i>
Mongoose (Herpestidae)	
Yellow Mongoose	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Cape Gray Mongoose	<i>Herpestes pulverulentus</i>
Common Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>
Meerkat	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>
Hyaenas (Hyaenidae)	
Southern Aardwolf	<i>Proteles cristatus</i>
Equines (Equidae)	
Plains Zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>
Mountain Zebra – VU	<i>Equus zebra</i>
Bovids (Bovidae)	
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>
Hartebeest	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Black Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes gnou</i>
Blue Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Tsessebe	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>
Bontebok	<i>Damaliscus pygargus</i>
Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Oribi	<i>Ourebia ourebi</i>
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Natal Red Duiker	<i>Cephalophorus natalensis</i>
Blue Duiker	<i>Philantomba monticola</i>
Bush Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Roan Antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>
Gemsbok	<i>Oryx gazella</i>
Klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>
Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>
Rhebok	<i>Pelea capreolus</i>
Southern Reedbuck	<i>Redunca arundinum</i>
Mountain Reedbuck - EN	<i>Redunca fulvorufula</i>
Cape Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>
Nyala	<i>Tragelaphus angasii</i>
Common Eland	<i>Tragelaphus oryx</i>
Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Southern Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus sylvaticus</i>
Giraffes and Okapi (Giraffidae)	
Southern Giraffe	<i>Giraffa giraffa</i>
Suids (Suidae)	
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
Bushpig	<i>Potamochoerus larvatus</i>
Hippopotamuses (Hippopotamidae)	
Common Hippopotamus - VU	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Oceanic Dolphins (Delphinidae)	
Heaviside's Dolphin	<i>Cephalorhynchus heavisidii</i>
Species seen:	59
Species heard:	1
Total species recorded:	60

Reptile List

Common name	Scientific name
Crocodiles (Crocodylidae)	
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
Elapid Snakes (Elapidae)	
Brown Forest Cobra	<i>Naja subfulva</i>
Dragons (Agamidae)	
Southern Rock Agama	<i>Agama atra</i>
Girdle-tail Lizards (Cordylidae)	
Highveld Crag Lizard	<i>Pseudocordylus melanotus</i>
Drakensberg Crag Lizard	<i>Pseudocordylus subviridis</i>
Augrabies flat lizard	<i>Platysaurus broadleyi</i>
Typical Geckos (Gekkonidae)	
Tropical House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i>
Common Dwarf Gecko	<i>Lygodactylus capensis</i>
Wall Lizards (Lacertidae)	
Spotted Sand Lizard	<i>Pedioplanis lineoocellata</i>
Skinks (Scincidae)	
African Striped Skink	<i>Trachylepis striata</i>
Western three-striped skink	<i>Trachylepis occidentalis</i>
Speckled Rock Skink	<i>Trachylepis punctatissima</i>
Kalahari Tree Skink	<i>Trachylepis spilogaster</i>
Monitor Lizards (Varanidae)	
Rock Monitor	<i>Varanus albigularis</i>
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>
Sand Snakes (Psammophiidae)	
Rhombic Skaapsteker	<i>Psammophylax rhombeatus</i>
Madagascar Brook Snakes (Pseudoxyrhopiidae)	
Common Slug-eater	<i>Duberria lutrix</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Mole and Western Keeled Snakes (Pseudaspidae)	
Mole Snake	<i>Pseudaspis cana</i>
Tortoises (Testudinidae)	
Angulate Tortoise	<i>Chersina angulata</i>
Leopard Tortoise	<i>Stigmochelys pardalis</i>
African Mud Turtles (Pelomedusidae)	
Helmeted Turtle	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>
Species seen:	21